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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
10/591,133	08/30/2006	Yosuke Kobayashi	040302-0583	7361
22428 7590 06/29/2009 FOLEY AND LARDNER LLP SUITE 500 3000 K STREET NW WASHINGTON, DC 20007				
EXAMINER				
ZANELLI, MICHAEL J				
ART UNIT		PAPER NUMBER		
3661				
MAIL DATE		DELIVERY MODE		
06/29/2009		PAPER		

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

The time period for reply, if any, is set in the attached communication.

Office Action Summary

Application No.

10/591,133

Applicant(s)

KOBAYASHI ET AL.

Examiner

Michael J. Zanelli

Art Unit

3661

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --
Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 30 August 2006.
2a) ☐ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-20 is/are pending in the application.
4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
6) ☒ Claim(s) 1-20 is/are rejected.
7) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
10) ☒ The drawing(s) filed on 30 August 2006 is/are: a) ☒ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☒ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
a) ☒ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
3. ☒ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- 1) ☒ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
2) ☐ Notice of Draftperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
3) ☒ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO/5508)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date 8/30/06
4) ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____
5) ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application
6) ☐ Other: _____

DETAILED ACTION

1. This application has been examined. Claims 1-20 are pending.
2. Receipt is acknowledged of papers submitted under 35 U.S.C. 119(a)-(d), which papers have been placed of record in the file.
3. The IDS filed 8/30/06 has been considered.
4. The lengthy specification has not been checked to the extent necessary to determine the presence of all possible minor errors. Applicant's cooperation is requested in correcting any errors of which applicant may become aware in the specification.
5. Claims 12 and 18 are objected to because of the following informalities:
 - A. As per claim 12, at line 5 the comma should be a period.
 - B. As per claim 18, at line 12 "fist" should be --first--.
6. The following is a quotation of the second paragraph of 35 U.S.C. 112:

The specification shall conclude with one or more claims particularly pointing out and distinctly claiming the subject matter which the applicant regards as his invention.
7. Claims 3-15 and 17-20 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention.
 - A. As per claims 3 and 18-20, the claims refer to "risk" but are vague as to what the risk is associated with (i.e., risk of what?).
 - B. As per claim 7, "the first risk" and "the second risk" lack antecedence.
 - C. As per claim 17, in the "wherein" clause "the weighted second reaction force value" lacks antecedence.

- D. As per claim 18, the claim is unclear as to what basis the second reaction force value is weighted by the weighing device.
 - E. As per claim 19, the claim is unclear as to what basis the second reaction force value is weighted.
 - F. As per claim 20, the claim is unclear as to what is meant by "interconnect the variables".
 - G. All claims depending from a rejected base claim are also rejected as containing the same deficiencies.
8. Claim 20 is further rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention.

The claim limitation "means for transmitting" uses the phrase "means for" or "step for", but it is modified by some structure, material, or acts recited in the claim. It is unclear whether the recited structure, material, or acts are sufficient for performing the claimed function which would preclude application of 35 U.S.C. 112, sixth paragraph, because the claim limitation "via haptic input" implies sufficient structure capable of providing the transmitting function.

If applicant wishes to have the claim limitation treated under 35 U.S.C. 112, sixth paragraph, applicant is required to amend the claim so that the phrase "means for" or "step for" is clearly **not** modified by sufficient structure, material, or acts for performing the claimed function.

If applicant does **not** wish to have the claim limitation treated under 35 U.S.C. 112, sixth paragraph, applicant is required to amend the claim so that it will clearly not be a means (or step) plus function limitation (e.g., deleting the phrase “means for” or “step for”).

9. The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –

(b) the invention was patented or described in a printed publication in this or a foreign country or in public use or on sale in this country, more than one year prior to the date of application for patent in the United States.

(e) the invention was described in (1) an application for patent, published under section 122(b), by another filed in the United States before the invention by the applicant for patent or (2) a patent granted on an application for patent by another filed in the United States before the invention by the applicant for patent, except that an international application filed under the treaty defined in section 351(a) shall have the effects for purposes of this subsection of an application filed in the United States only if the international application designated the United States and was published under Article 21(2) of such treaty in the English language.

10. Claims 1-4 and 16 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Hijikata (2003/0233902).

A. As per claim 1, Hijikata discloses a system for assisting a driver (Fig. 1) comprising: a reaction force device (50, 60) which determines different reaction force values based on stable and transient information regarding the vehicle and obstacle detected in the path of the vehicle [0026-0027]; driver controlled input device (80); and an actuator (70) coupled to the driver input device (80) and responsive to input from the reaction force device (60).

B. As per claims 2-4, as above whereby the stable and transient information include distance to the obstacle, vehicle speed and relative speed and are used

to determine risks and appropriate reaction force values which are to be applied to the driver input device [0038-0074].

C. As per claim 16, as above whereby the driver controlled input device may be an accelerator pedal (Fig. 1:80).

11. Claims 1-4 and 16 are further rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) as being anticipated by Yamamura (2005/0222742).

The applied reference has a common assignee with the instant application. Based upon the earlier effective U.S. filing date of the reference, it constitutes prior art under 35 U.S.C. 102(e). This rejection under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) might be overcome either by a showing under 37 CFR 1.132 that any invention disclosed but not claimed in the reference was derived from the inventor of this application and is thus not the invention "by another," or by an appropriate showing under 37 CFR 1.131.

Applicant cannot rely upon the foreign priority papers to overcome this rejection because a translation of said papers has not been made of record in accordance with 37 CFR 1.55. See MPEP § 201.15.

A. As per claim 1, Yamamura discloses a system for assisting a driver (Fig. 1) comprising: a reaction force device (50, 60) which determines different reaction force values based on stable and transient information regarding the vehicle and obstacle detected in the path of the vehicle [0026-0027]; driver controlled input device (80); and an actuator (electromagnetic clutch) (Fig. 3b:61) incorporated into the driver input device (80) and responsive to input from the

reaction force device (60), enabling select transmission of reaction force values to the driver input device (Abs).

B. As per claims 2-4, as above whereby the stable and transient information include distance to the obstacle, vehicle speed and relative speed and are used to determine risks and appropriate reaction force values which are to be applied to the driver input device (Fig. 4).

C. As per claim 16, as above whereby the driver controlled input device may be an accelerator pedal (Fig. 1:80).

12. The prior art made of record and not relied upon is considered pertinent to applicant's disclosure.

13. Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Michael J. Zanelli whose telephone number is (571) 272-6969. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday-Thursday 9:00 AM - 4:00 PM.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Thomas G. Black can be reached on (571) 272-6956. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free). If you would like assistance from a USPTO Customer Service Representative or access to the automated information system, call 800-786-9199 (IN USA OR CANADA) or 571-272-1000.

/Michael J. Zanelli/
Primary Examiner
Art Unit 3661